



Department of Justice

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DOWNSVILLE, LOUISIANA, MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL HATE CRIME

Hangman's Noose Leads to Guilty Plea

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department today announced that Robert Jackson, 37, of Downsville, La., pleaded guilty in federal court to placing a hangman's noose in the carport of the home of a family in order "to send a message" to African-American males who had been frequently visiting the victim's home. Jackson entered a plea to violating the Fair Housing Act by intimidating and interfering with another's housing rights because of race.

According to court testimony, the victim and her children arrived home on June 13, 2008, and found a hangman's noose suspended from a bird-feeder underneath the carport of her home. A subsequent investigation determined that Jackson, a former employee at a local company located next door from the victim's home, made the noose and placed it in the carport.

"A noose is an unmistakable symbol of hate in our nation, and it was used in this case to intimidate an innocent family," said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division. "The Department of Justice will vigorously prosecute those who resort to threats motivated by hate."

"A hangman's noose is a powerful symbol of racial intimidation and intolerance, and when used to interfere with federally protected rights, becomes a federal crime," said Stephanie A. Finley, U.S. Attorney for Western District of Louisiana. "The victim and her family sought nothing more than to live in their home in peace. Jackson's racially-motivated response has left him facing a prison sentence."

Sentencing is scheduled for Sept. 28, 2010. Jackson faces a maximum penalty of 12 months in prison, a \$100,000 fine, or both.

The case was investigated by the FBI, Monroe Resident Agency, and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Mary Mudrick and Trial Attorney Myesha Braden of the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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